

Halcyon House (Stoddert)
34th & Prospect Streets, N. W.
Georgetown, D. C.

HABS No. DC-69

HABS
DC
GEO
13 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington 25, D. C.

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Halcyon House (Stoddert House)

Owners: Mrs. Henry Kondrup and her daughter, Mrs. Kondrup Gray

Date of Erection: Built by Benjamin Stoddert in 1783, "after the manner of some of the elegant homes I have seen in Philadelphia."

Architect: Unknown

Present Use: Apartments

Present Condition: Nucleus of old home has been almost surrounded by incongruous architectural additions and hodge-podge details along the two street elevations.

Number of Stories: South facade of two-and-a-half stories overlooking terraced garden (commanding a view of the Potomac), is the least changed. There are five stories at the east end, caused by regrading of the hill.

Further Notes: The south front of this conventional Georgian mansion exhibits a fine pilastered doorway with fanlight and a modillion cornice. It is five-bays in width with upper windows 9 over 6 and those below 9 over 9. Of special interest inside is the Parlor woodwork, with cross-etched overmantel and flanking pilasters.

Accompanying photographs show a wing of the mansion and clearly indicate some of the alterations and additions made to the structure.

History Notes: Benjamin Stoddert (1751-1813) was secretary to the Board of War, serving in Philadelphia from 1779 to 1781. He was married in June of the latter year to Rebecca Lowndes, daughter of Christopher Lowndes of Bladensburg and American member of the Edward-Lowndes and Company of London.

Not long after his marriage Stoddert established himself as a shipping merchant in Georgetown, member of the firm of Forrest, Stoddert and Murdock with branches in London and Bordeaux. He is reported to have made a fortune in business, but late in life he wrecked it through land speculation in the new Capital city.

During the early negotiations for the establishment of the District of Columbia, Stoddert acted as Washington's confidential agent. He was one of the nineteen "original proprietors" who signed the agreement for the "ten mile square".

"Halcyon House" is therefore closely related to the origins of the District and further interlocked with the genesis and history of the Navy. Stoddert's duties with the Board of Trade had brought him into close contact with John Adams, then serving as President of the Board.

When Adams became President of the United States, Stoddert was appointed first Secretary of the Navy. The strength of our infant Navy and many of its honored traditions are due to the foresight and organizing genius of Benjamin Stoddert.

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13-

It would be most appropriate if his home could be preserved and used in some manner by the Navy Department.

Reference: Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, Historic Houses of George-Town and Washington City, Richmond, 1958, pp. 22-31. Illustrations include views of the South Front, Doorway and Parlor.

Prepared by: Russell Jones and Worth Bailey, HABS, National Park Service, March 1959.

Approved: _____

Dick Sutton
Chief Architect

Date 10/22/59

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

Addendum to:
"Halcyon House" (Benjamin Stoddert House)
3400 Prospect Street, N.W.
(Georgetown)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-69

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

"HALCYON HOUSE" (Benjamin Stoddert House) HABS, DC, GEO, 13

Location: 3400 Prospect, N.W. (Georgetown) Washington, D.C.

Present Owners: Edmund W. Dreyfuss and Blake Construction Co. (1969).

Present Occupants: Mr. & Mrs. George Roper in original house and tenants in apartments. (1969).

Present Use: Apartments. (1969).

Significance: Within the shell of the present structure, reasonably intact, is a fine example of a free-standing Georgian mansion. Built for Benjamin Stoddert, the first Secretary of the Navy, it was the scene of frequent informal conferences in connection with the shaping of national as well as Georgetown history. Despite twentieth-century alterations, the early house retains many its original details.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1787. It has been asserted that the house was erected in 1783, but deeds indicate that there was no structure on the lots before 1787. Stoddert bought the land in 1786 for 100 pounds. There is no mention in the deed of any buildings on the land, and the low price corroborates the suggestion that no structure was built at this time.
2. Architect: None; Known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1204, Lot 814 in Washington, D.C. (formerly in Square 34 of Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition to Georgetown. The house was built on Lot 17, (at the corner of Prospect Street and Frederick (34th) Street) with its gardens extending into Lot 16 (at the corner of Bridge (M) Street and Frederick Street). Stoddert purchased Lots 18 and 19 in 1795, and thus owned the entire block. In 1885, as part of litigation, Lots 16-19 were subdivided into Lots 20-38. Halcyon House was located on Lot 32, the largest of these. In 1888, Lot 32 was divided into Lots 39-51, with Halcyon House on Lot 48. Lots 40-47 faced Prospect Street, and Lots 49-51 faced 35th Street). Originally, the address was "Prospect, corner of Frederick Street". The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

Original and Subsequent Owners

1786

William Deakins, Jr.
and
John Threlkeld
to
Benjamin Stoddert

Deed November 25, 1786
Recorded April 18, 1787
Montgomery County
Land Records, Rock-
ville, Maryland
Liber 3C, folio 502

Lots 16 and 17 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and
Deakins Addition to Georgetown.

Purchase price--100 pounds to Deakins and one
shilling to Threlkeld (Threlkeld's wife, Eliza-
beth Ridgely, was Deakins' stepdaughter. The
token payment of a shilling was to protect
Mrs. Threlkeld's interest).

1795

William Deakins, Jr. of
George Town, Montgomery
County and State of Mary-
land
to
Benjamin Stoddert "of the
Town, County and State
aforesaid'

Deed March 30, 1795
Recorded July 26, 1795
Liber B-2, folio 264

"...all those two lots or portion of ground in Peter,
Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition to Georgetown
known by lots number Eighteen and Nineteen...with all
and singular the hereditaments, rights, members and
appurtenances..."

For "450 pounds current money of Maryland" (was paid
in cash).

1801

Benjamin Stoddert
to
The President, Directors &
Company of the Bank of
Columbia

Mortgage May 9, 1801
Recorded November 7, 1801
Liber G-7, folio 353

"...the said B. Stoddert for an in consideration of the sum of fifty thousand dollars to him in hand paid by the said President, Directors and Company of the Bank of Columbia...

Doth grant bargain and sell unto the said President, Directors and Company of the Bank of Columbia of that land whereupon the said Benjamin Stoddert now resides ...being in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition to Georgetown, being 240 ft. square, bounded on East by Frederick St., on South by Falls St., on West by Fayette St. and on North by the street which runs between the dwelling house of the said Stoddert and that of John T. Mason." (This is Prospect Street). Benjamin Stoddert and Uriah Forrest jointly owned the bank \$16,490 and Stoddert alone owned \$17,400. The bank loaned \$50,000, including existing obligations, so Stoddert only received \$33,890. The agreement stated that if Stoddert failed to pay the notes, the bank could sell the premises. This deed was acknowledged before William Thornton, "one of the Commissioners under the Act for Establishing the Temporary and Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States."

1834

William W. Corcoran, Tr.
to
The President, Directors &
Company of the Bank of
the United States

Deed August 13, 1834
Recorded August 30, 1834
Liber W.B. 51, folio 139

Apparently the Bank of Columbia had to foreclose and take over the property; when the bank went out of existence, the Washington branch of the Bank of the United States assumed the property.

1838

The President, Directors &
Company of the Bank of
the United States
to
Richard Smith, Tr.

Deed in Trust January 29, 1838
Recorded March 8, 1838
Liber W.B. 67, folio 48

The Bank of the U.S. has agreed to sell to:

Clement Smith
William S. Nicholls
John Kurtz
Samuel Swartout
Dudley Seldon
Elisha Riggs

John Carter
William Jewell
William W. Corcoran
Walter Mead
John S. Crary
John Wainright

as tenants in common, not joint tenants except as specified, various listed properties in Washington and Georgetown, including Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition, fronting 240 feet on Bridge St., 240 feet on Fayette St., 240 feet on Prospect St. and 240 feet on Federick St., "...together with the large three-story brick house situated thereon...." The lots are placed in the hands of Richard Smith as trustee.

1839

Richard Smith, Tr.	Deed September 11, 1839
William S. Nicholls	Recorded September 27, 1839
to	Liber W.B. 74 folio 375
William M. Worthington	
(of the State of Louisiana)	

Smith, representative of the Bank of the U.S., and Nicholls, representative of the buyers noted in previous deed, sold Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition, with "...large three-story brick house..." for \$6500 (\$1000 of it in cash). Whole block was sold to Worthington with no encumbrances.

William M. Worthington	Deed of Trust September 25, 1839
to	Recorded September 30, 1839
Richard Smith, Tr.	Liber W.B. 78, folio 252

Same property as above as security for debt of \$5500.

1842

William M. Worthington died, bequeathing his son, William Nicholas Worthington, all residue of estate and appointing his wife, Alice, as Executrix and Guardian of son. If son died before reaching 21 years, the estate would go to his wife. Provision for wife to sell property if she deemed it best.	February 12, 1842 Proved January 13, 1843 (No Administration number because Will was not probated but was proved by witness). Will Book 5 (O.S.), page 243
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1849

William H. Haxall and wife,
Alice
 (late Alice Worthington
 relict of William M.
 Worthington), of the
 first part
Richard Smith, Tr.
 of the second part
 to
Charles W. Pairo, third part

Deed October 11, 1849
Recorded October 18, 1849
Liber JAS 8, folio 65

The Worthington child is still a minor; debt of \$5500 to Richard Smith, Tr., has been paid. Alice has married William H. Haxall. She sold Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld Deakins Addition, with dwelling house and other improvements, to Charles W. Pairo for \$3500 (\$500 in cash).

Charles W. Pairo and
 wife, Mary Jane
Alice Haxall, guardian of
 William Nicholas
 Worthington
 to
George D. Fisher

Deed of Trust October 15, 1849
Recorded October 26, 1849
Liber JAS 8, folio 154

Pairo owed Alice Haxall \$500, payable at 6% in one year and \$2500 payable within ten years, with semi-annual interest payments (note dated Oct. 11, 1849). Property was security for loan, with provision for Pairo to live in house if payments were kept up.

"...until some default shall happen in the payment of the said single bills and the principal and interest aforesaide, to permit the said Charles W. Pairo, his heirs and assigns, to occupy, possess and enjoy the said property and take the rents and profits thereof."

The agreement was that if Pairo should meet all his commitments punctually, Fisher would convey the property of Pairo after the loan was paid. If there were a failure in payment of a single not or interest on principal, Fisher would sell the property at auction, with certain regulations about advertising the sale, etc.

1857

Charles W. Pairo and
William Nourse
to
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.

Deed September 14, 1857
Recorded September 25, 1857
Liber JAS 42, folio 261

Pairo and Nourse, partners in a banking firm in Washington, unable to meet their commitments, wanted to sell their property, the proceeds to be applied to their debts. Pairo released Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition. Edes served as trustee, with power to sell for benefit of creditors.

1858

Charles W. Pairo and
William Nourse
to
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.

Deed January 6, 1858
Recorded January 16, 1858
Liber JAS 148, folio 27

Same property as above. Deed refers to dwelling houses and other improvements. First reference to more than one house. Deed deals with other property also.

Charles W. Pairo
et ux Mary Jane
to
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.

Release of Dower May 3, 1859
Recorded May 17, 1859
Liber JAS 175, folio 32

Extinguishes dower rights of Mary Jane Pairo. Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition and dwelling house.

1859

Samuel C. Edes, Tr.
to
John L. Kidwell

Deed of Conveyance May 16, 1859
Recorded May 17, 1859
Liber JAS 175, folio 37

Edes sold Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19 in
Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins
Addition "...together with dwelling
house and other improvements..." for
\$6000 cash, subject to payment of
debt of Pairo to Fisher, Tr. for
Alice Haxall (deed Oct. 15, 1849,
JAS 8, 154).

1865

George D. Fisher
William H. Haxall and
wife, Alice
William N. Worthington
to
John L. Kidwell

Deed October 23, 1865
Recorded December 19, 1866
Liber RMH 24, folio 271

Vertified that debt had been paid. Worth-
ington, now 21 years, agreed. Kidwell owned
property outright.

1872

John L. Kidwell
to
Anthony Hyde, Tr. and
Charles M. Mathews, Tr.

Deed October 9, 1872
Recorded October 9, 1872
Liber 698, folio 176

Mortgage of \$10,000 with Lots 16, 17, 18
and 19 in Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and
Deakins Addition as security for loan.

1873

John L. Kidwell
to
Martin F. Morris

Deed in Trust March 17, 1873
Recorded March 21, 1873
Liber 712, folio 258

All of Kidwell's property in Washington and
Georgetown was put in trust for his wife,
Catharine "...to have, hold and use premises
and appurtenances." Included Lots 16, 17, 18

and 19. "witnesseth that for and in consideration of the natural love and affection of him the said John L. Kidwell for his wife Catharine A. Kidwell and of his desire to provide for her comfort and support and that of his family...."

Included also in the deed of trust to his wife, "...paintings, pictures, engravings and works of art and all the furniture of every kind in and upon said premises."

1882

Catherine A. Kidwell,
wife of John L. Kidwell,
of the first part
Martin F. Morris, Tr.,
of the second part

Deed October 12, 1882
Recorded October 23, 1882
Liber 1024, folio 177

to
Emma McCahill (daughter of
John and Catherine Kidwell)

\$20, 000 paid to Catherine A. Kidwell for conveyance of Lots 16, 17, 18 and 19, Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition, together with "...the buildings, improvements, ... rents, ...thereof and all rights and interest, both in dower and otherwise, and all paintings, pictures, engravings, and works of art, and all the furniture in...the premises." This document is later stated to have been intended as a trust (Law Suit in 1893-98).

1885

John L. Kidwell died February 16, 1885, after a long illness, during which he was paralyzed and unable to attend to business for several years prior to his death.

1893-1898

Catherine A. Kidwell
vs.
Emma McCahill
John W. Kidwell
Ida West Hyde
George A. Hyde
Julius L. Kidwell
Charles M. Mathews,
surviving trustee

Suit filed June 28, 1893
Court order filed August 3, 1898
Equity Cause No. 14856
Supreme Court of the
District of Columbia

Long and complicated litigation--Catharine Kidwell had not seen Deed of October 12, 1882 (Liber 1024, folio 177) and had not been told that it conveyed the property in fee simple. She also believed that the \$10,000 mortgage had been paid and that the property should be released from encumbrance. Emma McCahill had paid no part of the \$20,000 to her mother.

In 1885 Emma McCahill had sub-divided Lots 16-19 into Lots 20-38, of which 74 feet fronted on Prospect St. at corner of Fayette (35th) St. while remainder fronted on Fayette from Prospect to Bridge (M) and on Bridge from Fayette to Federick (34th). The large Lot 32, almost a quarter of the block and including Halcyon House, remained intact.

Emma McCahill had sold some of the lots and applied to her own use, without accounting, the proceeds. However, Lot 32 (former Lot 17 and parts of Lots 16, 18 and 19) was not sold.

The Court Decree of May 9, 1896, required a sale of the property and Lots 21-32 were advertised for sale at public auction on June 20, 1896. Trustees attended the sale. There was no bid and property was withdrawn from sale.

The trustees believed that the subdivision as offered was disadvantageous. They agreed to make a subdivision of the large Lot 32 (on which Halcyon House is located). The 28,600 square feet of Lot 32 were divided into 13 lots numbered 39-51 inclusive. Halcyon House was on Lot 48, corner of Prospect and 34th Streets.

The second sale at public auction was held on June 7, 1898. Those lots which Emma had sold in 1885 and 1888 (on M and 34th, on 35th and on Prospect near 35th) were not offered for sale. Emma McCahill was the highest bidder at the sale and purchased the rest of the lots at fifty cents a square foot.

1900

Emma McChill, widow
to
Albert Adsit Clemons

Deed August 7, 1900
Recorded August 28, 1900
Liber 2490, folio 458

Lots 44-48 out of Lot 32 and building for
\$7500.

1938

Clemons died March 17, 1938.

Will March 13, 1938
Probated May 12, 1938
Will Book 252, page 586
Administration 53362

Directed that all of his property (including
present Lot 314) be sold, proceeds to be
donated to Harvard University.

1942

F. Urban Woolpert
George H. Paltridge
William E. Huntington,
executors and trustees
under the last Will and
testament of Albert Adsit
Clemons, deceased, acting
herein in exercise of the
power vested in them by
said Will

Deed November 30, 1942
Recorded December 4, 1942
Liber 7816, folio 309

to
Dorothy Williams Sterling

1951

Frederick A. Sterling,
executor of the last
Will and testament of
Dorothy Williams Sterling,
deceased, acting in exer-
cise of the power conferred
upon him by said Will and
pursuant to Order of the

Deed August 21, 1951
Recorded August 22, 1951
Liber 9539, folio 560

District of Columbia,
passed August 16, 1951
in Administration Cause
No. 76276

to

Anne K. Gray
Susie H. Kondrup

1961

Anne K. Gray
Susie H. Kondrup
to

The President and Directors
of the Georgetown College,
a Corporation in the District
of Columbia

Deed August 24, 1961
Recorded August 31, 1961
Liber 11660, folio 297

1966

The President and Directors
of Georgetown College
to

John W. Truver

Deed September 22, 1966
Recorded September 29, 1966
Liber 12674, folio 295

John W. Truver
to
Edmund W. Dreyfuss and
Blake Construction Co.

Deed September 22, 1966
Recorded September 29, 1966
Liber 12674, folio 303

4. Alterations and additions: Before 1900, the only architectural change was the construction of a bay window to replace a door facing Prospect Street. Albert Clemons, who bought the house in 1900, remodelled the house extensively. Retaining the basic house, Clemons extended the wings out toward the north (Prospect Street), and built a new front entrance. In the resulting center space, Clemons built an entry hall on the ground (basement) level, a ballroom-theater on the first floor, and had a vast unfinished space on the second floor.

Until the late 1940's the north front of the original house could still be seen, complete with window blinds, inside the ballroom, the remainder of which was panelled with heavily moulded Victorian doors salvaged from local sources. The large space on the top floor, reached by a small curving stair from the northeast bedroom, was built largely

of framing timbers and architectural details from a demolished church. The north elevation of the original house remains as the south wall of this room, and the two original dormers are visible through the upper clerestory windows. Clemons also added apartments to the building.

Mrs. Dorothy Sterling, who purchased the house in 1942, reported that "There are dozens of tiny rooms--some of them hardly large enough for a table or chair. There are staircases that lead nowhere, doors that open on blank walls, and closets that open on other closets."

(Times-Herald, March 14, 1943)

The Sterlings began the restoration of the house and garden, and installed electricity. (Times-Herald, March 14, 1943). Their remodelling included the addition of carved moldings and further panelling from an Italian palazzo to the ball room. The house was again remodelled by Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Kondrup who bought the house in 1951. According to Mrs. Gray's account, when she bought the house

"On the floor above the bathroom are bits of stained glass windows, a pulpit, carved beams on the ceiling--all of which came from Old St. Matthews Church when it was torn down...

"Elsewhere is a lantern from the Capitol, which was sold when the Capitol was converted from gas to electricity. There's also woodwork from the old Metropole Hotel, marble and bits of wood from the old Marcia Burns farm where the White House now stands."

"It took us two years to do over the house..."

"After we bought it we found two rooms we didn't know existed. One was a trap door with steps going to another room, the other was at the end of a corridor so long and winding that we have never have gotten to the end of it." (Roosevelt).

8. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Benjamin Stoddert was born in Charles County, Maryland in 1731. He spent part of his youth in Philadelphia. Stoddert joined Captain Hartley's "Additional Continental Regiment of Cavalry" as a captain in that city. He was wounded at Brandywine and resigned his commission in 1779. That year he was named

Secretary to the Revolutionary War Board in Philadelphia, and worked under John Adams, President of the War Board. Stoddert resigned his post and returned to Maryland in February 1781. Several months later he married Rebecca Lowndes, daughter of Christopher Lowndes, a wealthy Maryland shipping merchant. In 1783, Stoddert began a mercantile career as a partner in the Georgetown shipping firm of Forrest, Stoddert and Murdock. (Turner).

Stoddert acquired extensive property in Georgetown and Washington in addition to his holdings in Maryland. He was one of the most influential citizens in the community. His close associates included leaders in Georgetown and many national leaders, such as George Washington and John Adams. Halcyon House was often the scene of parties where the Stodderts' friends gathered. (Rebecca Lowndes Stoddert Papers).

Correspondence between Stoddert and George Washington testifies that Stoddert played an important role in choosing the site of the Federal government. (Times-Herald, March 14, 1943; Tindall). He was one of the nineteen "original proprietors" who signed the agreement for the ten mile square of land for the District of Columbia. In 1793, the Bank of Columbia was founded to handle the transactions involved in establishing the new seat of government. Stoddert was one of the incorporators of the bank. In 1798, he became its president. (Proctor; Benjamin Stoddert Papers). During these years, the Stodderts maintained both Halcyon House and a country home in Maryland known as "Beall's Pleasure", located near Landover. (Rebecca Lowndes Stoddert Papers; Wilfong).

In 1798, President John Adams appointed Stoddert Secretary of the Navy to direct the newly formed Department of the Navy. At this time, France and the United States were close to war. Stoddert accepted the position and moved to Philadelphia, the temporary seat of government pending the completion of facilities in the new capital. (Turner).

In 1800, before the seat of government was moved to Washington, President Adams asked Stoddert to take on the additional duties of Secretary of War. He did so, continuing as Secretary of both the Navy and War Departments until April 1801. Although Thomas Jefferson, the new President, asked Stoddert to remain in office, he did so for only one month before retiring to private life. (Turner).

The 1800-1807 tax assessments give some indication of the Stodderts' lifestyle. Their land and house were appraised at \$8,000. In addition, their Georgetown property included eight slaves, two cows, three horses, two carriages, and many items of furniture. (Record Group 351, National Archives, Records of the City of Georgetown, Roll 1).

After returning to Georgetown, Stoddert resumed his efforts to promote the advancement of the new Federal City. He invested heavily in real estate in Washington, and became financially involved in many civic projects such as the erection of the Upper Bridge across the Eastern Branch. These activities strained Stoddert's finances and in 1801, he was forced to place a mortgage on his home. He turned to the Bank of Columbia, which he had helped to establish eight years earlier, and received a loan of \$50,000 (although he actually received only two-thirds of the amount because his former debt to the bank was deducted).

Stoddert's wife died shortly after the turn of the century, leaving him with eight children. (Turner). One of them, Elizabeth, was married to Thomas Ewell in the house in 1807. It was a festive occasion attended by many prominent people. Stoddert retired to his country home several years later. He died, still heavily in debt, in 1813, and was buried in Maryland. (Turner).

Dr. and Mrs. Ewell remained in Halcyon House until 1819, although it was still owned by the Bank of Columbia. After the Ewells' departure, the house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Mackall. The tax records for 1818 show "B.F. Mackall, B. Stoddert's heirs" assessed for lots 17 and 19 and a two-story brick house at \$7600. The Mackalls, however, never owned the property. It is likely that Mackall paid the taxes as a trustee for Stoddert estate. Land records show that the Bank of Columbia continued to own the property until 1834, when it was assumed by the Washington branch of the Bank of the United States as part of the transfer of assets when the Bank of Columbia closed. (Record Group 351, National Archives, Records of the City of Georgetown, Roll 11; Proctor).

William M. Worthington, who bought the house in 1839, was the first private owner of the property since Benjamin Stoddert. It is not clear who occupied the house before Worthington bought it. The address is not listed in the Georgetown City Directories of 1830 or 1834.

The Kidwell family moved into Halcyon House in 1860. John L. Kidwell was a prosperous druggist who owned a business on E street, Northwest. (City Directory). Members of the family resided in the

house through much of the nineteenth century, while ownership was contested in complex litigation.

Albert Adsit Clemons bought Halcyon House in 1900, and remodelled it extensively. Clemons and the carpenter who helped him reputedly lived in the cellar of the house. A newspaper account described Clemons as an eccentric who customarily appeared in a torn coat, an ancient creased hat with holes at the peak, and unpressed trousers, carrying a cane. (The Evening Star, March 28, 1938) A neighbor later remembered:

"... Clemons sitting on a barrel in front of house directing the work...it was believed at the time that Clemons was 'touched' and that he thought he wouldn't die as long as he kept on building something." (Georgetown Spectator, Dec. 14, 1966).

Clemons gathered and hoarded an array of what he called "antiques." Some were genuine artifacts discarded from notable buildings and some were odds and ends of every imaginable material--bits of marble and stone, pieces of wrought iron, an assortment of window frames. He collected paintings, furniture, rugs, and building ornaments. (Will, Administrative code 53362).

Although Clemons furnished the house with many of his treasures, such as the marble busts which sat in each of the five round windows with their backs to the street, his collection was so extensive that he needed additional storage space. For this purpose he bought, in 1915, the John Thomson Mason House ("Quality Hill") at 3425 Prospect Street. (HABS No. DC-167) Land Records Washington, D.C., Liber 3029, folio 15). He also bought the house at 3410 Prospect Street for storing the overflow of objects.

For years the house was padlocked and all were denied admission. Then he built apartments in the house for rental purposes. A description of his efforts to entice tenants is reported in a newspaper at the time of Clemons' death in 1938:

"Outside the house, up to five years ago, hung perhaps the sternest sign ever put up by a hopeful landlord. It read: Apartments for rent. No children, no dogs, no electricity permitted. Apartments furnished in beautiful antiques." (Bolles).

There were conflicting theories about the source of income that would support almost forty years of construction, as well as a continuous collection of objects. A report in the Washington Daily News at the time of Clemons' death said,

"Clemons and his brother were believed to have made their money in New England utilities." A later report in the Times-Herald said that Clemons "...had plenty of money reportedly provided by his wife on condition that he stay away from her."

It is true that Clemons and his wife were separated. She was Elizabeth White, daughter of Senator White of New Hampshire. Mrs. Clemons never lived in Halcyon House. (The Washington Daily News, March 23, 1938).

Of his treasured collection, Clemons stated in his will:

"The many articles which I have collected for years past, consisting of paintings, pictures, ornaments, furniture, images, bric-a-brac, building ornaments and miscellaneous material ...have long held my personal attention and interest, and I have cherished hope therefore that they become the nucleus for a permanent collection and museum. However, as my hopes in this respect have not been realized, I now desire..."

He then directs his executors to give to museums and established institutions "...any articles that may be acceptable to them..." and to sell the remainder at private or public auction.

Sixteen institutions did accept articles from Clemons' estate. Among them were the Chicago Historical Society, The Smithsonian Institution, National Parl Service, the Library of Congress, Gadsby's Tavern in Alexandria, Virginia, the Museum of Fine Arts at the University of Virginia, Washington Cathedral, the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts and the Lincoln House (Ford's Theatre). All other items were sold, save for a few which went to Constance Louderbach, daughter of Albert's deceased brother, Dr. Carl Clemons.

Clemons directed that all of his real estate be sold within five years after the furnishings had been removed from the premises and that the proceeds and assets of his estate should be donated to Harvard University as an endowment to be named for him.

For four years after Clemons' death Halcyon House remained vacant. (City Directories). Then, in 1942, it was purchased by Mrs. Dorothy W. Sterling, wife of Honorable Frederick Sterling, former United States Ambassador to Sweden. The Serlings moved into Halcyon House, occupying part of the original, but much altered, house. They rented out other apartments in the house.

A newspaper account at the Sterlings' purchase of the well-known house described their astonishment at the havoc Clemons had wrought and their adjustment to the curious house:

"The Sterlings moved in about two months ago and began exploring the maze of rooms and stairways. Bit by bit they began to learn the weird geography of their remarkable home until now they rarely get lost.

"A few days ago, however, Mr. Sterling was astonished to find an unexpected visitor wandering vaguely through the theater that runs almost the length of the house, three stories up, on the Prospect Avenue side.

"How did you get in here?" he asked.

"The dazed intruder took him down through dark passageways and galleries and out through a side door on Thirty-fourth Street that looks to the casual passerby like nothing more than a couple of weather-beaten windows blinds that have not moved for 20 years.

"I just pulled them and they came open", explained the stranger, "and when I looked up those stairs it seemed to me nobody had been in this place since 1902, so I decided to take a peek. When I got in, I got lost and couldn't find my way out."

Mrs. Sterling added her discoveries in the house:

"There are dozens of tiny rooms--some of them hardly large enough for a table or chair. There are staircases that lead nowhere, doors that open on blank walls and closets that open on other closets."
(Times-Herald, March 14, 1943).

The Sterlings planned to restore Halcyon House to its original state, a formidable project but one to which Mrs. Sterling, gifted artistically, was particularly attuned.

Restoration of the house was halted by Mrs. Sterling's death. In 1951, the house was bought by Susie H. Kondrup and her daughter Anne K. Gray, who was married to George Gray, an official in the U.S. Department of State. The Grays lived in the main part of the house and remodelled the apartments. In 1961, the house was sold to Georgetown University and used to house female students in the Foreign Service and Language

Schools. In 1966, the property was sold to Edmund W. Dreyfuss and the Blake Construction Company, and is at present used as an apartment house.

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Prepared by Volunteers for the
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Washington, D.C.
1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This symmetrical, refined, late eighteenth-century house with large main block and flanking wings was incredibly disfigured in the first half of the twentieth century by Albert Clemons, an eccentric collector of, among other things, architectural details from demolished buildings. The south front and the interior of the main block are still largely original, while the remainder is completely obscured by Clemons' amazing assemblage.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor; many weak areas have been simply stabilized, not restored. Other areas continue to deteriorate.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions: Original structure was approximately 48' by 36' with 24' by 16' wings. Five bays across south garden front (original front elevation). Central part of original structure had five bays across Prospect street elevation. Present structure has eleven bay north front elevation on Prospect street. The original main block was two-stories high plus attic and basement; the wings were two stories high plus attic and basement, though shorter. Current building is four-and-one-half stories plus basement. The original east end wall is visible from 34th street.

2. Foundations: Stone and brick.

3. Wall construction: Brick, Flemish bond in main block, running bond in wings.

4. Porches: Nothing original remains. There is a small semi-circular porch with steps down each side at the south entry;

however, it is very insecure, as it is built partially brick supported on plywood.

5. Chimneys: There was one large chimney at each end of the main block as well as one at the far end of each wing originally. There are now several more, though not within the original house area.

6. Openings:

a. Doors and Doorways: The front (south) entrance appears to be largely original. The glazed fifteen light door itself is of recent manufacture; however, it hangs in an elegant eighteenth-century doorway with flat fluted Tuscan pilasters supporting short lengths of frieze complete with triglyphs and a full denticulated cornice, repeated in the triangular pediment. The door is set within a panelled, arched reveal with a simple fan light and denticulated transom bar. There is a three-part keyblock and a free but symmetrical vine carving in the spandrels.

b. Windows and shutters: First floor windows were nine-over-nine-light double hung wood sash, second floor windows were nine-over-six-light sash, dormer windows were six-over-six-light sash, in the main block. Windows in the wings were six-over-six-light sash. Shutters throughout were louvered wood. Many of the original windows remain, though some are now indoors. The two in the northeast first floor room have been reglazed with mirrors; one in the northwest room has been converted to a door, the other has been replaced with a mural.

7. Roof:

a. Shape and covering: Gable; ridge running east-west; slate covering.

b. Framing: Wood.

c. Cornice: Wood; bed moulds, shaped modillions, crown mould. The one on the south is in position; the one on the north has been removed and re-used as the horizontal member of the huge triangular pediment on the twentieth-century addition to the north. The wings had a simple box cornice with frieze, bed, and crown moulds.

d. Dormers: Two slate-sided wood dormers with gabled roofs and six-over-six-light double hung sash windows on both north and south fronts.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floors plans:

a. The first floor had an entry-stair hall in the center of the south front, a large room in each corner of the main block, and a narrow hall in the center of the north front. There were two-story wings at the north and south ends of the main block, now almost

completely enclosed in later construction.

b. The second floor had a bedroom in each corner of the main block, a stair hall in the center of the north side which now contains the attic stairs. The southwest bedroom now has a small bath installed in one corner, the northwest bedroom also has a small bath and access stairs to a large space in the Prospect Street addition. The northeast room has been partitioned into storage and bath areas serving the southeast bedroom.

2. Stairways: The main staircase ascends from north to south along the west wall of the entry hall to a landing above the front (south) door; from there it ascends south to north along the east wall to the second floor. There is another landing above the first, apparently leading nowhere; the stairs to it date from the present century and are poorly constructed. The balusters, newels, and rail all appear to be later replacements. There is a small enclosed utility stair to the basement beneath the main stairway.

3. Flooring: Random width pine.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted.

5. Doors and Doorways: There are a number of late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century panelled doors, many of which have been recut to fit different openings; some have even been split down the center to form pairs of doors. There are large trimmed openings joining the north and south rooms on both sides of the first floor.

6. Decorative features and trim: The main block retains much in the way of original trim, although many coats of paint have obscured the detail. The mantel in the northeast first floor room has fluted rectangular pilasters at each side of the black slate surround supporting an entablature with an oval panel in the center, and arched vertical panels in projections above the pilasters. The bedmould under the shelf, a series of very thin Greek Revival mouldings typical of the period, breaks out around the projections over the pilasters, as does the shelf itself. There is a large panelled overmantel with an eared architrave supporting a broken a broken scroll pediment. At each side of this chimney piece are full height flat fluted Tuscan pilasters topped with shot lengths of frieze complete with triglyphs supporting a denticulated cornice above the fireplace area. The cornice in the remainder of the room is similar but without dentils. The other mantel pieces are simpler nineteenth-century ones, not original to the house.

7. Hardware: There is an extensive variety of early to late nineteenth-century hardware throughout.

8. Mechanical equipment: a. Heating: Boiler in the basement, radiators throughout, several of the original fireplaces are still in use.

b. Lighting: There are no original fixtures. The chandelier in the northwest first floor dining room is a nineteenth-century bronze-and-crystal one, converted from gas to electricity.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Situated on a hill overlooking the Potomac River, this house was once the sole occupant of its square. Commercial structures along M Street and residences along Prospect Street now surround the complex structure. The south was once the principal entrance; however, the twentieth-century additions shifted the main entrance to the north.
2. Enclosures: A variety of brick and stone walls and iron fencing enclose the south gardens and terraces.
3. Walks: Principally herringbone brick, with some concrete and some stone.
4. Landscaping: Great overgrown boxwoods fill what is left of extensive formal planting on the south side of the main house, now more informal in character and not particularly well-groomed. Neatly trimmed shrubbery borders the Prospect Street sidewalk, and there is much ivy on the building itself.
5. Outbuildings: No original outbuildings remain; however, just southwest of the house is a small brick building, sometimes called the chapel, which dates from the early part of the twentieth century. There are marked similarities in the brickwork here with that in the center portion of the Prospect Street facade of the main house. This small building, now used as a separate dwelling, contains an assortment of salvaged architectural parts. For example, there is a graceful fan-light in the entry area similar to the inner one at 3425 Prospect Street, a carved openwork panel above a doorway in the bedroom, and a small pulpit-like enclosed landing on the stair up to the kitchenette. Joist pockets high on the sidewalls of the main room, evidence of an earlier upper level, now contain Christmas-tree lights. It is rumored that there is a crypt below the main room.

Prepared by: The Office of
Walter G. Peter, Jr., AIA
Architect
February 7, 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selections Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture - Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by the office of Walter G. Peter, AIA. The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.

ADDENDUM TO:
HALCYON HOUSE
(Benjamin Stoddert House)
Georgetown
3400 Prospect Street, Northwest
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-69
DC, GEO, 13-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HALCYON HOUSE (Benjamin Stoddert House)

This report is an addendum to a 26 page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 3400 Prospect Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Prospect Associates

Present Use: private residence and rental

Significance: Halcyon House is an outstanding example of Federal Period domestic architecture, sited to take maximum advantage of the eighteenth-century view of Georgetown Harbor, a perhaps unique example of an extended early twentieth-century exploration in architectural fantasy, and superlative example of late twentieth-century tastes in American architectural preservation. The house derives substantial and additional significance as the home of the first secretary of the Navy and confidante of George Washington, Benjamin Stoddert, who was also a victim of Georgetown's uncontrolled, speculative real estate market.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1787. It has been asserted that the house was erected in 1783, but deeds indicate that there was no structure on the lots before 1787. Stoddert bought the land in 1786 for 100 pounds. There is no mention in the deed of any buildings on the land, and the low price corroborates the contention that no structure had been built at that time.

2. Architect: Unknown

3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1204, Lot 814 (formerly Square 34 of Peter, Beatty, Threlkeld and Deakins Addition to Georgetown. The house was built on Lot 17 (at the corner of Prospect Street and Frederick, now 34th Street) with its gardens extending into Lot 16 (at the corner of Bridge, now M, Street and Frederick Street). Stoddert purchased Lots 18 and 19 in 1795,

ADDENDUM TO
HALCYON HOUSE
HABS No. DC-69
(page 28)

and thus owned the entire block. In 1885, due to litigation, Lots 16-19 were subdivided into Lots 20-38. Halcyon House was located on Lot 32, the largest of these. In 1888, Lot 32 was divided into Lots 39-51, with Halcyon House on Lot 48. Lots 40-47 faced Prospect Street, and Lots 49-51 faced 35th Street. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

- 1786 Deed (Liber 3C, folio 502)
William Deakins, Jr. and John Threkeld
To
Benjamin Stoddert
- 1795 Deed (Liber B2 folio 264)
William Deakins, Jr.
To
Benjamin Stoddert
- 1801 Mortgage (Liber G7 folio 353)
Benjamin Stoddert
To
Bank of Columbia
- 1834 Deed (Liber W. B. 51 folio 139)
William W. Corcoran, Tr.
To
Bank of Columbia
- 1838 Deed in Trust (W.B. 676 folio 48)
Bank of the United States
To
Clement Smith, William S. Nicholls, et at.
- 1839 Deed (W.B. 74 folio 375)
Richard Smith, Tr. for Bank of the United States and William S. Nichols,
representing other owners
To
William M. Worthington

Apparently the Bank of Columbia had to foreclose and take over the property; when the bank went out of existence, the Washington branch of the Bank of the United States assumed the property.

ADDENDUM TO
HALCYON HOUSE
HABS No. DC-69
(page 29)

- 1842 Bequeath (Will Book 5 {O.S.} page 243)
William M. Worthington
To
William Nicholas Worthington
- 1849 Deed (Liber JAS 8 folio 65)
William H. Haxall and wife Alice Worthington
Richard Smith, Tr.
To
Charles W. Pairo
- Alice the daughter of Wm. M. Worthington and brother of minor brother
Wm. N. Worthington
- 1857 Deed of Trust (Liber JAS 42, folio 261)
Charles W. Pairo and William Nourse
To
Samuel J. Edes, Tr.
- 1858 Deed (Liber JAS 148, folio 27)
Charles W. Pairo and William Nourse
To
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.
- 1859 Release of Dower (Liber JAS 175 folio 32)
Charles W. Pairo and wife Mary Jane
To
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.
- 1859 Deed of conveyance (Liber JAS 175 folio 37)
Samuel C. Edes, Tr.
To
John L. Kidwell
- 1865 Deed (Liber RMH 24, folio 271)
George D. Fisher, William Haxall, and wife, Alice
William N. Worthington
To
John L. Kidwell
- 1872 Deed (Liber 698 folio 176)
John L. Kidwell

ADDENDUM TO
HALCYON HOUSE
HABS No. DC-69
(page 30)

To
Anthony Hyde, Tr. and Charles M. Mathews, Tr.

1873 Deed in Trust (Liber 712 folio 258)
John L. Kidwell
To
Martin F. Morris

1882 Deed (Liber 1024 folio 177)
Catherine A. Kidwell, wife of John
Martin F. Morris, Tr.
To
Emma McCahill (daughter of the Kidwells)

1893 - 1898 Lawsuit (Equity Cause No. 14856)
widow of John Kidwell, who died in 1885, sues the other heirs

A court ordered public auction on June 20, 1896 produced no bidders and subsequently the trustees subdivided lot 32, where Halcyon House was located, into 13 lots numbered 39-51, with Halcyon House on Lot 48. At a second public auction on June 7, 1898, Emma McCahill purchased the lots.

1900 Deed (Liber 2490 folio 458)
Emma McCahill
To
Albert Adsit Clemons

1938 Will (Will Book 252 page 586)
Albert Adsit Clemons directs that his property be sold

1942 Deed (Liber 7816 folio 309)
Urban Woolpert, George H. Paltridge, and William E. Huntington, Tr.
To
Dorothy Williams Sterling

1951 Frederick A. Sterling, executor
To
Anne K. Gray and Susie H. Kondrup

1961 Deed (Liber 11660 folio 297)
Anne K. Gray and Susie H. Kondrup

To
Georgetown College

1966 Deed (Liber 12674 folio 295)
Georgetown College
To
John W. Truver

1966 Deed (Liber 12674 folio 303)
John W. Truver
To
Edmund W. Dreyfuss and Blake Construction Co.

The above chain of title was taken from the earlier HABS documentation of the property, but the chain of title, which is described as incomplete in the original write-up, is internally inconsistent and contrary to Stoddert's papers at the Library of Congress, Manuscript Collection, Madison Building. Not only is it unclear how the property was transferred from one bank to another, but on a more important level, the earlier HABS documentation states that Stoddert's financial trouble and the mortgaging of his property occurs in 1801, while in his Library of Congress papers he writes to an acquaintance in 1810 "Dear Sir, I want money" and he mortgages his Georgetown House to the Bank of Columbia on 15 Sept. 1810, not 1801, according to his papers.

(Edmund Dreyfuss is deceased but his family continues to own, apparently without the Blake Construction Co., the property under the entity, Prospect Associates.)

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: No information available

4. Original plans and construction: No information available.

5. Alterations and additions: The original Federal period house of the late 1790s is visible on the south and east facades. The other two facades are enclosed within later additions. The thickness of some door reveals between rooms suggest to the trained eye that those walls were originally outside walls. According to the 1969 HABS write-up: "Before 1900, the only architectural change was the construction of a bay window to replace a door facing Prospect Street. Albert Clemons, who bought the house in 1900, remodeled the house extensively. Retaining the basic house, Clemons extended the wings out toward the north (Prospect Street), and built a new front entrance. In the resulting center space, Clemons built an entry hall on the ground (basement) level, a ballroom-theater on the first floor, and had a vast unfinished space on the second floor.

"Until the late 1940's the north front of the original house could still be seen, complete with window blinds, inside the ballroom, the remainder of which was paneled with heavily molded Victorian doors salvaged from local sources. The large space on the top floor, reached by a small curving stair from the northeast bedroom, was built of framing timbers and architectural details from a demolished church. The north elevation of the original house remains as the south wall of this room, and the two original dormers are visible through the upper clerestory windows. Clemons also added apartments to the building..."

While subsequent owners, specifically the Sterlings, made alterations, the major post-Clemons renovation was done by John Dreyfuss and Mary Noble Our, the present owners. Over the course of much of the 1980s, the south lawn was largely turned into an underground sculpture studio and covered driveway and garage, all in poured concrete. The only indication of the sculpture workshop is the gable roof skylight running along the inside of the 34th Street wall, which was rebuilt. From the nearly two story high sculpture studio, stairs lead up to the main house which has offices on the lower level and on the floors above are the residence of the owners and apartments, all these spaces were renovated according to designs by Stavropoulos Architects in collaboration with John Dreyfuss, who has a bachelor's and master's in architecture.

B. Historical Context:

Wounded during the Revolutionary War, Stoddert was partner in the Georgetown shipping firm of Forrest, Stoddert, and Murdock after the War. Not only was he the owner of extensive real estate in Georgetown, Washington, and Maryland, but he was greatly influential on the local and national levels. He is credited with playing an important role in selecting the capitol, he was one of the nineteen proprietors who signed the agreement creating the District of Columbia, and he was an incorporator and president of the Bank of Columbia, which helped facilitate the establishment of the federal government in Washington. Later President John Adams appointed him the first Secretary of the Navy and later he was given the additional duties of being Secretary of War.

Early in the nineteenth century, Stoddert developed financial problems, presumably due to his real estate speculation, and he eventually lost the house and retired to his country estate, where he died in 1813.

Nearly 100 years later, Albert Adsit Clemons bought the house and began his alterations that substantially and apparently permanently changed the appearance of the house, only preserving the original Federal period facade on the south.

A few years after Clemons's death, Ambassador and Mrs. Frederick Sterling purchased the house, continuing a twentieth-century trend for retired political (and no doubt wealthy) appointees to acquire a grand house in Washington, which might only be occupied during the Washington political and social season.

(The above is an edited version of the Part I prepared by the Volunteers for the Commission of Fine Arts, 1969. See project information)

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: In the 1969 HABS documentation, architect Walter G. Peter wrote: "This symmetrical, refined, late eighteenth-century house with large main block and flanking wings was incredibly disfigured in the first half of the twentieth century by Albert Clemons, an eccentric collector of, among other things, architectural details from demolished buildings. The south front and the interior of the main block are still largely original, while the remainder is completely obscured by Clemons' amazing assemblage. With the passage of thirty years and the renovation by the current owners, it is easier to appreciate the mixed architectural character of the house. It has a Federal period appearance of a restrained, flat facade on the south and a classical, but too robust to be Federal period, detailing, as seen in the pilasters, in the interior. The north facade lacks the finesse of the interior, but it too suggests a classical inspiration, executed in a more Georgian Revival expression, marked by the powerful columns.

It should be noted that a major design aspect of this house is the proportions of the rooms. With twelve foot ceilings in most rooms and a sixteen foot ceiling in the music room, each room has more than sufficient height and light from the windows to be comfortable. In the larger rooms, the generous height elevates the rooms to exceptional spaces, which is most notable in the music room.

2. Condition of fabric: The house and gardens are in excellent condition. The owners undertook extensive renovations, removing later interior accretions and signs of wear, and imposing a contemporary interpretation of Federal period architecture.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Original structure was approximately 48' by 36' with 24' by 16' wings. Five bays across south garden front (original front elevation). Central part of original structure had five bays across Prospect Street facade. Present structure has eleven bay north front facade on Prospect Street. The original main block was two-stories high plus attic and basement; the wings were two stories high plus attic and basement,

though shorter. Current building is four-one-half stories plus basement. The original east end wall is visible from 34th Street.

2. Foundations: Brick and stone.

3. Walls: Brick, Flemish bond in main block, running bond in wings. On the south facade the watertable is capped with ovolo molding with a lip on the top.

4. Structural system, framing: It is assumed that the system is load bearing brick walls.

5. Porches, stoops: Nothing original remains. In 1969 there was a small semi-circular porch with steps down each side at the south entry, however it was very insecure as it was built of bricks partially supported on plywood. That feature has been removed and the present steps are stone slabs on brick risers.

6. Chimneys: Inside each end wall of the original block (east and west) is a large chimney, with a small chimney at either end of the later wings (east and west).

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front (south) entrance appears to be largely original. The six paneled door replaced an also modern glazed fifteen light door, which was present in 1969; however, it hangs in an elegant eighteenth-century doorway with flat fluted Tuscan pilasters supporting short lengths of frieze complete with triglyphs and a full denticulated cornice, repeated in the broken bed pediment. The door is set within a paneled, arched reveal with a simple fan light and denticulated transom bar. There is a three-part keystone and a free, but symmetrical vine carving in the spandrels.

On the south facade, each wing has a six paneled door with brick flat arch.

The present front (north) entrance is six paneled double doors below a fanlight. Set within the brick archivolt is a keystone and above it two cherubs flanking an escutcheon.

b. Windows: On the south facade main block, the first floor windows are nine-over-nine light double hung wood sash, second floor windows are nine-over-six light sash, dormer windows were six-over-six light sash. The windows in the wings are six-over-six. The basement windows are glazed with three lights. Each wing has six-over-six double hung sash on the first and second floors, as well as a clerestory that consists of four banks per wing, each bank is glazed with three lights arranged side by

side. Although present in 1969, the louvered shutters have since been removed. All of the sills are wood.

The north facade is punctuated by windows glazed with six-over-six lights, but the windows vary in size. For example, not all of them are double hung, and the large windows for the music room have fixed lower sash.

The east facade contains six-over-six windows, double hung, except for the top floor, which are nine-over-nine.

8. Roof

a. Shape, covering: Gable, ridge running east-west; slate covering.

b. Cornice, eaves: Wood; bed molds, shaped modillions, crown molding. The one on the south is in position; the one on the north has been removed and re-used as the horizontal member of the huge pediment on the twentieth century addition to the north. The wings have simple box cornice with frieze, bed, and crown molds. The bed mold on the south consists of closely spaced blocks with a single hole each on the soffit and fascia.

c. Dormers: Two slate-sided wood dormers with gabled roofs, six-over-six light double hung sash windows on the south. In 1969 there were also two on the north, but they no longer exist.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. Ground floor: (The original north facade entrance, which is the entrance from Prospect Street, opens onto the ground floor.) The ground floor consists of a series of offices, meeting spaces, and small kitchen and bathroom space organized around the central stair hall. From the stair hall, another set of stairs lead down to the extensive studio spaces of John Dreyfuss. This space, which is below the south lawn, is the equivalent of the basement space, but it is open to the rear driveway/garage and because of its height, amount of light (from skylights and driveway opening), to call it a basement is a misnomer.

b. First floor: (The south facade entrance opens onto the first floor.) The entrance hall is flanked by dayrooms to the east and west. North of the entrance hall is the stair hall and to the west of the stair hall is the dining room and to the east of the stair hall is the living room. North of these three rooms is the music room. This ensemble of

rooms consists the first floor of the original house. The music room runs across the entire north facade of the original house. East of the main (original) block are two sitting rooms flanking, on the north and south, a secondary stair. West of the main block are the kitchen (south side), another secondary stair and closet, and the north portion is an apartment with an entrance off the secondary stairs landing. This is but one of the apartments entered through a ground floor door on the west facade.

c. Second floor not inspected, besides the stairs.

d. Third floor has the library across the north side of the main block.

2. Stairway: The main stairs's location is original, but the stairs and components date to the Dreyfuss renovation and consist of square-in-plan paneled newels with pyramidal caps and square-in-plan undecorated spindles. The rail, cap, and bead on newel are a dark stain, while the newels and spindles are painted white. At the first floor landing the stairs ascend along the east wall, there is a landing between the first and second floors and then the stairs ascend along the west wall. These pattern is repeated up to the third floor. The stairs descend to the first floor where bottom two stairs and the single newel post face east rather than north towards the Prospect Street entrance. To the south, a long stair descends the sculpture studio. That stair starts out as a finished stair in the house to utility stairs, demarcating the change from house footprint to beginning of later basement structure. Secondary stairs are in the east and west wings, repeating the use of the single newel post and paneled treatment. The stringers are simple s-curves. The e-curve stringers in the main stairs are slightly more decorated with a more graceful curve, but neither stringer appears to be an attempt to suggest that they are original to the eighteenth century.

3. Flooring: The floors are stained wide planks, brought in from another historic house, according to Wendy Charles of Prospect Associates.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster and painted or wallpapered. There is drywall in some non-original spaces and the ceilings have speakers in them, and so it is assumed that the plaster ceilings (painted white) have at least sections wherein drywall has replaced the plaster.

Baseboards and cornices appear new, echoing nineteenth-century classical details, such as the dentil in the entrance hall cornice.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Modern six-paneled doors are used throughout the first floor. Eared door surrounds are employed on the openings from the entrance hall. As

with the baseboards and cornices, the doors and surrounds are late twentieth-century reinterpretations of late eighteenth-century features.

b. Windows: The window reveals in the dayrooms are splayed and paneled. Those in other rooms lack the splayed, paneled treatment. As with the door surrounds, the window surrounds appear to be recent reinterpretations of late eighteenth-century window treatments. An interesting effect is achieved in the drawing rooms where the window header runs into the cornice, forming one continuous treatment. Along the north wall of the music room, the tall, double hung sash windows above a lower fixed sash are enclosed with surrounds that start at the baseboard and are approximately about 12 feet tall. Above these windows is a round window with rectilinear muntins.

6. Decorative features and trim: None of the treatments appear original and in fact date to the Dreyfuss renovation. The treatments are notable for their robust reinterpretation of classical detailing, especially apparent in the fluted Doric pilasters, capitals, and frieze with triglyph, all supporting a four-stepped cornice. The wood fireplace mantels, with slate facing surrounding the opening, echo Federal Period detailing with the use of fluted pilasters, dentilled mantel shelves (some with projecting ends and center pavilions), and oval shapes in the friezes, but clearly none is intended to appear as an original eighteenth-century fireplace. In the living room, the fireplace is flanked by pilasters and has a broken scroll overmantel, separated from the fireplace mantel by a narrow strip of the wall.

7. Hardware: No original hardware appears to have survived .

8. Mechanical systems: The house has central forced air heating and air conditioning.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: To quote Walter Peter's 1969 HABS write- up: "Situated on a hill overlooking the Potomac River, this house was once the sole occupant of its square. Commercial structures along M Street and residences along Prospect Street now surround the complex structure. The south was once the principal entrance; however, the twentieth century additions shifted the main entrance to the north." Halcyon House continues to dominate the neighborhood. Its massive north and east and west stone foundations and oversized half-round pilasters and pediment overwhelm those streets and to the south the long lawn, with its massive stone wall, is elevated well above 34th Street. From the Francis Scott Key Bridge and Park the south facade of the house can be seen looming over its neighbors.

The south lawn is a formal affair of four distinct, yet interrelated spaces. A long axis walk from the south entrance steps down to a stone terrace demarcated by a segmental shape, with grass to either side, then down steps to the lower lawn where the terminal of the axis is a small gable roofed temple folly. The wall beyond the folly is topped with a Chinese lattice fence. West of the lower lawn is another separate landscape of a major sculpture set within a stone circular path. North and south of the paved area, there clusters of shrubs and the shrubs south of the sculpture area conceal two sets of steps descending to the studio level. West of this are is a rectangular pool set with a paved terrace. South of and running the east-west width of the pool and sculptural terraces is a lower, grassed terrace. This terrace is above the garage and to the east of this terrace is the open service court/driveway. At the east end of the service court where the gates are, a glass gable roof over part of the sculpture court runs parallel and adjacent to the 34th Street wall. In sum, very different treatments (the formally symmetrical upper and lower terraces beyond the house, the sculpture garden to its west, the pool further west, and then the fourth area consisting of the south and east borders of glass roof and terraced garage and open service court) are cleverly integrated by balancing the sizes of each area while tolerating distinctly different uses and surface treatments, which honestly reflect the different uses.

2. Historic landscape design: Unknown.

3. Outbuildings: Quoting from Peter's description: "No original outbuildings remain; however, just southwest of the house is a small brick building, sometimes called the chapel, which dates from the early part of the twentieth century. There are marked similarities in the brickwork here with that in the center portion of the Prospect Street facade of the main house. This small building, now used as a separate dwelling, contains an assortment of salvaged architectural parts.. ." Adjacent to the gable roofed chapel, with half-round window in north pediment, is another attached building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In 1969 volunteers for the Commission on Fine Arts prepared the historic information and Walter G. Peter, AIA prepared the architectural information. It was published the next year as HABS Selections Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture-Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia." HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris edited the information and transmitted it to the Library of Congress as part of the HABS collection in 1979. The earlier versions of the HABS Report carry detailed bibliographies. Lebovich did some research at the Library of Congress, Peabody Room of the Georgetown Branch Library, and the National Archives, but worked primarily from the earlier materials, changing them to reflect the renovated state of the house and to provide a more historically balanced evaluation of the house.

Prepared by: Bill Lebovich, architectural historian, May 2000

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Georgetown Documentation Project was sponsored by the Commission of Fine Arts and undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) of the National Park Service. Principals involved were Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, HABS/HAER. The documentation was undertaken in two phases. The summer 1998 team was supervised by John P. White, FAIA, Professor of Architecture, Texas Tech University; and architecture technicians Robert C. Anderson, Boston Architectural Center; Aimee Charboneau, Tulane University; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Adam Maksay, United States/International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) architect from the Transylvania Trust. Historic research was initiated by Bryan C. Green, historian, Richmond, Virginia, during this summer. The summer 1999 team was supervised by Roger S. Miller, architect, Alexandria, Virginia, and architecture technicians David Benton, The Catholic University of America; Edward Byrdy, The Catholic University of America; Irwin J. Gueco, The Catholic University of America; and Clara Albert, US/ICOMOS architect from the Transylvania Trust. The project historian, and author of the written reports, was William Lebovich, architectural historian, Chevy Chase, Maryland. The photography was undertaken by Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, and James Rosenthal, photographic assistant.